VOX REGIS & REGNI:

OR A

PROTEST

AGAINST

VOX CLERI;

AND A

Perſwaſive (thereby occaſion'd) to *make ſuch Alterations* as may give eaſe

TO OUR

DISSENTING BRETHREN.

Recedunt a me, & vobis, qui dicunt, nolumus eſſe meliores, quàm Patres Noſtri. Bernard. *ad* Abbates *Sueſſione congregatos* Epiſt. 91.

LONDON,

Printed for *G. C.* and are to be ſold by *Richard Baldwin* in the *Old-Bayly*. MDCXC.

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VOX CLERI:

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TO OUR

DISSENTING BRETHREN.

Recommended to the Ministry, Gentlemen, Academy, Gentlemen, and Parents Nyssen. Terrae &c. ad Abbatiae Sanctae non regates Epist. 91.

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VOX REGIS & REGNI.

AS one of the *Clergy*, however amongſt the meaneſt, who have a title to that Stile, I cannot but be concern'd to read, what I am made to ſpeak in *Vox Cleri*; and, as a *Clergy-man*, I utterly diſown it *for my ſelf*, and I queſtion not, but there are *thouſands of us* who do the ſame: It is neither *my ſenſe* nor *language* what is impoſed on us under *that Stile*, and I cannot therefore, but with the greateſt abhorrence, publiſh *my proteſt* againſt it. For what is it *the Author* thereof would have the World to judge of us, but that we are *a Set of men* who have very *little tenderneſs* for our *weaker Brethren*; very *little zeal* for *his Service*, who hath called us to our *high imployment*; very *little concern* for the *publick peace of Church and State*; if having ſuch an *opportunity* put into our hands, as is now before us, and, as 'twere, the *previous aſſurance* of the *concurrence of the whole* Nation (as now aſſembled in Parliament) to confirm what *we doe*; ſhall think fit *to do nothing* at all at *ſuch a time*, as *this is*?

For my part, I tremble to conſider, what in all likelyhood will be the iſſue of ſuch a *Laodicean Temper*: I tremble to think, what 'tis for God *to ſpue* a Church *out of his mouth*, and what 'tis (the *very temper* certainly, that with reſpect to theſe things, ſeems to be too much among ſome of us,) that will provoke him to give up *a people* to *ſuch a Judgment*! for ſo 'tis expreſt, *Revel.* 3. 15, 16, 17. *I know thy works that thou art neither hot nor cold: So then becauſe thou art Lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will ſpue thee out of my mouth: becauſe thou ſayeſt I am rich*

and increaſed with goods and have need of nothing, and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, poor and blind, and naked.

For may not this be our caſe, as we conſider *our conſtitution* and compare it, with what *other Churches* may come ſhort *of it*, that by a falſe way of reaſoning from the preference we thus aſſume, we thence conclude, that *there is nothing wanting to us*, no need upon every Capricio to ſubmit to *change and alteration*. For 'tis not as we compare our ſelves with *one another*, but as we come up to the *Rule*; that's *common to all*: 'Tis not our being the beſt *conſtituted Church in the world*, not our thinking ſo of our ſelves, or others thinking, or ſpeaking ſo of us, if there be ſtill a greater *purity and ſimplicity* of the Goſpel, than we can hitherto pretend to: Is the *holieſt man* on the earth in ſuch an happy State, that with St. *Paul*, he ſhould have no need to declare, *that he hath not already attain'd, nor were already perfect, but that he it ſtill to follow after if that he may apprehend that, for which he alſo is apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus: that forgetting thoſe things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which are before, he may preſs toward the mark for the price of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* Or whatever *is humane*, be it in *perſons* or *publick bodies*, can it pretend to be beyond any amendment.

I would not detract *from our Conſtitution*, but why muſt we give it more, than the *Authors* of it (the *firſt Reformers* I mean) themſelves thought to belong to it. For do not they ſpeak of it? as *what upon juſt cauſes may be altered, and changed.*

And to ſpeak truth, what was *it ſelf* in its *firſt Eſtabliſhment*, but *an alteration*? a *great and happy change* from what was ſo *full of Corruptions*, as the *Romiſh Church*, and all *its Offices* are. We need go no farther to be ſatisfied herein, than to what themſelves have ſo fully declared under thoſe two Heads, *viz. concerning the Service of the Church*, and *of Ceremonies why ſome be aboliſhed and ſome retain'd*, in which 'tis manifeſt that they have ſo juſtified what themſelves have herein done, as to leave the *ſame Rule* for others to proceed by in like caſes, *according as they ſhall think beſt to the ſetting forth of Gods honour and glory, and to the reducing the people to a moſt perfect, and godly living with-*

out

out Errour, and Superſtition; Nor do our *late Reformers*, thoſe I mean, who in 1661 made the *Alterations in the Liturgie*, ſpeak otherwiſe in their *Preface to it*, their words are theſe, *viz. It is but reaſonable, that upon weighty and important Conſiderations, according to the various exigency of times and occaſions, ſuch changes and alterations ſhould be made therein, as to thoſe that are in place of Authority ſhould from time to time ſeem either Neceſſary or Expedient.* And if *Neceſſity*, or *Expedience* now require it, and *to thoſe in place of Authority* it ſeems ſo, why there ſhould not be *a farther alteration*, let any man give the Reaſon.

But no reaſon can be given againſt it; None Firſt, from the word of God, for that requires that we *ſtill preſs on towards the mark of our high calling*. None Secondly, From *the Rubrick*, for that ſuppoſes, and even dictates it. None Thirdly, From the *Conſtitution of the Church*, as now 'tis eſtabliſht, for that is founded on it. None Fourthly, From the *Laws of the Nation*, for they *are humane*, and may be *altered or changed*, it is *one of the great fundamentals of our Government*; the End, and buſineſs of *our Parliaments* to deliberate hereon. And Fifthly, For the *dictates of mens private Conſciences herein*, their being *bound by*, or *to the former Conſtitution*, their *Oaths or Subſcriptions* therein *required*, or *given*, 'tis very weak to argue from thence. *All theſe* falling of themſelves, if the *Conſtitution be alterable*, and it hath ſpoken it ſelf to be ſuch, for ſo 'tis declared in *the Preface to the Liturgy*, that the *particular Forms of Divine worſhip, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be uſed therein, being in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and ſo acknowledged, it is but reaſonable; that upon weighty and important Conſiderations, according to the various exigency of times and occaſions, ſuch changes and alterations ſhould be made therein, as to thoſe that are in place of Authority ſhould from time to time ſeem either Neceſſary, or Expedient*: And if ſo, then can no *aſſent or conſent*, or whatever *other tye* we are under, obtain any longer, than whilſt *'tis in Force*; it being only to the *uſe of thoſe* things, as *things that are in their own nature indifferent* and *alterable*, and *ſo acknowledged*, we are thereby obliged; the conſequence whereof is, that whenever they ſhall be *lawfully altered*, they

may

may be as *lawfully* laid aſide, and for the ſtinging Concluſion, as the Author imagins with which he hath taken his farwel of *the two Authors of thoſe Letters for Alterations*, on which he makes his Remark, as being men whom he would *not believe, ſhould they ſwear to what they have ſaid, becauſe by what is matter of fact, ſuch men have acted contrary to their Oaths, and Solemn Subſcriptions*, I doubt when it ſhall be ſeriouſly conſidered, He will be found to *fight as much like Don Quixot, with windmils diſturbing his brain*, but much more to act like the *Fur Predeſtinatus* under a *fatal neceſſity*, the quaint Compariſon under which he expreſſes his contempt of thoſe he reflects on, as *either of* them; For were it not too much favouring of his own Levity, his Compariſon might be a little further improved, and inſtead of *Fur Prediſtinatus*, *Lunatick*, be ſupplied, and would exactly expreſs this Caſe: For as there is nothing more uſual than to ſee thoſe poor wretches, after they are once maſter'd, bound, or chain'd by their Keepers, never after to reſiſt them again, tho but ſeemingly bound with the *weakeſt threads and ſtraws*: So becauſe one under the *powerful Bonds* of *Oaths and Subſcriptions*, tho the *binding force* be taken away; And thoſe who have the power to ſet *free*, ſhall take off the *reſtraint*, *and infranchiſe the Conſcience*, as to any *farther Obligation*; yet the *diſtempered fancy* ſhall ſtill hold the man *in bondage*, and make him think himſelf as much *bound*, as when *thoſe* were in greateſt force.

That 'tis farther declared in the *preface to the Liturgy*, by them who made the *Alterations in* 1661: *We are fully perſwaded in our judgments, that the book as it ſtood before eſtabliſhed by Law, doth not contain any thing contrary to the word of God, or to ſound Doctrine, or which a godly man may not with a good Conſcience uſe and ſubmit unto or which is not fairly defencible againſt any that ſhall oppoſe the ſame*; This is as *high a Teſtimony*, as can well be given of any thing that *is humane*, and Suppoſes *the Obligations* under which men were *to uſe it*, as reaſonable, as what have been ſince in force; And yet they doubted not to make *Alterations in it*, *And who of the Church* ever hath blamed them for ſo doing? Had it not been agreable to the *Oaths and Subſcriptions* before made, how came they to yield to ſuch a change, how came

they

they *willingly, and of their own accord,* they uſe their own words, *to aſſent to ſuch Alterations* ? Nor did *they* conſider by *what Perſons, what the pretence, or to what purpoſe they might be tender'd to them, but only the Neceſſity, and Expedience* of what they did : Whatever the *End of others* was, *their aim was to do that which in their beſt underſtandings they conceived might moſt tend to the preſervation of Peace and Unity in the Church; the procuring of Reverence, and exciting of Piety, and Devotion in the publick worſhip of God; and the cutting off occaſion from them that ſeek occaſion of Cavil, or quarrel againſt the Liturgy of the Church.*

And if the *ſame Ends* may be ſtill any farther advanced, what is it ſhould hinder the *happy progreſſe.*

And as with reſpect *to thoſe who made the Alterations,* ſo with reſpect to *others*; How come *ſo many of them,* who were then living, and had given their *approbation* to the *Former book,* nay in the times of truth had many of them been little leſs then *Confeſſors and Martyrs for it,* and called *themſelves* in diſtinction from others, *the Church of England, as conforming to it, to Receive, Subſtract, and give their aſſent, and conſent to this* ? Or how came ſo many *worthy men* afterwards, *Men,* who were able enough to have conſidered, what was *Lawful,* what *unlawful,* what *conſiſtent with a good Conſcience,* what could not be done but *with a bad one,* to ſubmit to it.

And why now upon the ſame grounds, *If neceſſity or Expedience* call for it, *and thoſe in place of Authority* ſee good, may not it bear a new and more correct Edition ſtill.

Pudet hæc opprobria vobis, which the Author layes ſo great ſtreſs on, as if *thereby we confeſt the manner of our publick worſhip were ſo corrupt, that we were aſhamed of it, and were convinced of a Neceſſity to purge,* is the moſt trifling thing a *Man of Senſe,* much more a *Man of Conſcience,* ſhould be affrighted at. For 'tis not whether we are aſhamed of it, or no : No we think we juſtly magnifie it, as the *beſt Conſtitution* any *Eſtabliſht Church enjoys* : But 'tis *whether any thing* that is *better,* may be yet thought on ; and if ſo, then I am ſure, *Pudet hæc opprobria vobis,* &c. will too nearly concern us ; and 'twill be the *higheſt ſhame, and reproach to reaſon, and Conſcience too,* if we ſhew not our *zeal for it* : *To be Divines* is to be perſons,

who

who profeſs themſelves given up to thoſe ſtudies which ſhould accompliſh them in the *Service of both*, and 'twill be not a little *derogatory to our Function*, if knowing what is *more excellent*, we ſhall ſtill hold faſt what is *leſs ſo*:

But 'twill be askt.

1. *Why muſt we do, what none as yet hath required of us.*

2. *Why muſt we do, what we are perſwaded, will be but loſt Labour, when it is done!*

That if it ſhould not have the deſired Succeſs in bringing in the preſent Diſſenters, yet it would be highly uſeful to the Church, and greatly for the advancing that Union and accord, which is aimed at if it ſhould but prevent men, hereafter from going off from us; If the preſent diſſenting Brethren may not ſo eaſily be prevaild on, though I cannot be ſo uncharitable; as to imagine it; yet may not thoſe who ſhall be born hereafter, and grow up among us, Or who have not yet been tempted to withdraw from our Communion be taken off from their indifferency and worſe, to imbrace the profeſſion of the Church, which ſhall have ſo faithfully endeavour'd to remove all *ſtumbling blocks and occaſions of Offence*: 'Tis a conſideration certainly worth our minding.

But have *none required it from us*! Then

1. What means *the Commiſſions* to act by!

2. What mean *the Directions* how to proceed!

3. What means the *voice of the Nation*, and of the *whole Proteſtant Church*, that look for it from us!

4. What means the *Scruples of our particular Flocks*, which would hereby be eaſed?

5. What mean, I dare appeal to many of our own breaſts, *the Scruples*, we our ſelves *could ask eaſe in?* and what we have ſo long ſacrificed to *Decency and Order? to Peace and Unity?* what for theſe ends we have *uſed and Submitted unto* (as 'tis ſo wiſely expreſt, *In the Preface to the Liturgy*,) rather than *choſen, or preferred* before what is ſtill capable of *farther Amendments.*

My Brethren theſe are things, that do *require ſomething from us*; theſe are *things that have a voice* and will be heard one time, or other, either *at Mans, or Gods Tribunal.*

To ſay *none requires it, when the Nation* hath been ſo long in a *Ferment* about theſe things:

when

When a *Civil war* hath already been kindled for is at least this made one of the great *Pretences of mens dissatisfaction*.

I could say more, the Expectation of those glorious times, which are still behind for the Church of Christ, *when the Earth shall be full of the knowledg of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea*, *Isaiah* 11. 9. For then as it is in the next preceding words, *they shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain*: There will be then no *more Schisms or Divisions, no quarrels* certainly about things, that on all sides are own'd to be *alterable*, no breach of *Peace* and *Union* to lead on to that *Ruine and Destruction*, which only the want of the *knowledge of the Lord* can bring upon *a Church or People*:

Besides, things in the world being as they are upon *the Wheel*, and all tending to some *great change, and Alteration in Religion* as well as in the *several states of men*, have these *no voice?*

Is it not worth our while to consider a little, *what God is doing* in the world, and bethink our selves whether there be not something in which it imports us yet further to purge our selves before *he who hath his Fan in his hand do it so*, as to leave us among that *Chafe, which shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire*, Matth. 3. 11. Who can tell, as 'tis in the foregoing verse, whether the *Ax be not laid to the root of the Tree*, 'Tis what those, who are most zealous *against alteration*, seem most to fear. *And is there no fruit*, we are upon such a warning *to bring forth*, that it may *not be hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

Ut teipsum Serves, non expergiscere? can we imagin 'tis for nothing that God hath so long *had a Controversie with us*; that we would so sleightly heal the hurt of the Daugher of our people. Let us, O sons of *Levi*, betake our selves to our *Urim, and Thummim, and Enquire of the Lord, what that accurs'd thing* is, that is among us; We cannot want a full direction if we take this method; For the *Book* that was put *into our hands*, when we entred *into Holy Orders*, is that *Urim and Thummim*; there's the *clearest light*, there the *Rule of Perfection*, by which whilst we guid our selves, we cannot *err*: *Our Bible* that will tell us, that no *judgment* ever came upon a *Church or People* but *for some sin*; that there is no *judgment* but may be removed by *Repentance, and Reformation*; I would not put too great a stress upon the matter, but is it not likely that the want of *tenderness, and compassion for our weaker Brethren*, (if that should chance to be at the bottom) *the want of any thing of that love which our* good Lord *hath made, the distinguishing character of his Disciples*, *John*

13. 35. *In those, whose work 'tis in every sense to be the Ministers of Reconciliation, in those too*, whose great Argument for *their Constitution* hath been always drawn from *the Peace and Union, that Order and Decency* they thought themselves so much concern'd to contend for; I say, is it not likely, is it not possible, that this may have some influence in the calling *for those Judgements*, we have already been under, and have too *much reason to* fear are *still impending over us*? Especially, where 'tis the *same Peace, and Union*, the same *Order and Decency* which now call for *a change*, which have hitherto, (whilst things were under *a legal Establishment*, and *no legal call there was* to alter them) been so highly urged against it?

Only herein I must not be *so undutiful, so unnatural* to my *Mother the Church of England*, as to charge all the blame at her door, I dare not so much as insinuate that, only 'twill become her, when she sees the danger her Children are in with her, to be so natural to consider what in all probability may be the occasion of it, and what she can do to remove it.

And here I would apply to those, who have been still too ready *to overtake her between the Straits*, Lament. 1. 3. A little to sound their own bowels, and see whether these to may not be some defect *of that Brotherly pity, and Compassion* they ought to have *in the common distress*? whether there may not be some degrees of that *Love and Charity* wanting there, which might tend *to heal the wound? If judgment begin at the house of God*, it as much concerns others to reflect, where it *may end*, 1 *Peter* 4. 17.

Do they *expect any ease from others*, let them be as ready to give, as to receive; a *Christian Condiscention* is as necessary on one side as the other; And I hope to God, after so much experience, as we have all had of the advantage the *common enemy* hath, and is still ready to take *by our divisions*, we shall at least so far reform on all hands, as, should we be so unhappy as not to come *to the Temper* which is so much hoped, yet to let *Brotherly love continue*, Hebr. 13. 1. Remembring what the *Apostle of the Lord, and our Apostle, the Apostle of the Gentiles*, hath left as a fit Rule for us all, *Phil.* 3. 15. *Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you.*

I would not pretend to be over curious in the secrets of *those Providences*, under which *at present*, and *of late* the *Nation* hath been; but is it not (my Brethren) a matter worthy *your learning, your Piety? worthy your profession*, whose business 'tis

let me ſo expreſs it, to attend *the Ark of God* in all its motions, *worthy thoſe places* you fill, as *Repreſentatives of the Clergy*, to ſearch out, what may be the cauſe *of Gods* dealing thus with us?

The *taking off the wheels of our Chariots*, when with *Pharaoh* we thought, we had been driving on for *Victory and Triumph.*

The ſtop put to *our hopes*, which were ſcarce big enough to anſwer the ſucceſs that came tumbling in upon us.

The miſcarriages ever ſince we know not from whence (yes we of the *Clergy* ſhould know, 'tis our buſineſs *to ſtudy, and follow Providence*) of all things among us, *have theſe no voice?*

The many Judgments, that have been upon the *Nation*, *Plague*, *Fire*, *Sword*, our *Heaven made as Iron*, and *our Earth as Braſs*, as 'tis expreſſed, *Levit.* 26. 19. The *emptying us from Veſſel to Veſſel*, the great *danger Church and State* have been in, of being at once utterly overthrown, *the holy Reform'd Religion*, I mean with all our *properties and liberties*, which have been ſo *near to their grave, have all theſe no voice?*

The reſcuing us *out of the Jaws of death*, and giving us a *further time* to conſider, why all theſe things have befallen us, *hath this no voice?*

The Alarm God hath ſo lately given us, in that *dreadfull tempeſtuous Wind*, that was ſo terrible at *Land and Sea*, doth it not tell us, that he that ſuffer'd it to make but ſome *ſlight impreſſions* on *our Houſes*, could as eaſily have *overturn'd all*, and *buried us in the Ruines*, he that ſcattered only *ſome of our Ships*, and as we hope (for the full account of the loſs is not yet known) ſuffer'd *only ſome of them to founder*, can when he pleaſe, *break them all*, as he did *Jehoſaphats Ezion-geber*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 36, 37.

And, I would to God, it could not after all this be ſaid, the little Efficacy *Gods walking thus contrary to us, hath had upon us all* to make us think ſeriouſly of *a thorow, and due Reformation*; that though God hath been ſo ſignally *avenging the quarrel of his Covenant*, as 'tis expreſt, *Levit.* 26. 25. (For flatter we our ſelves with what we will, *'tis this*, and *this only*, I mean the *neglect of returning to him* with the ſolemn *profeſſions, and practice of better Obedience*, can be the *cauſe of Gods dealing thus with a people*,) yet we have *not return'd unto him*; and *hath this no voice? doth all this require nothing* from us, in ſuch *a day, as this is?* Is *there* nothing *theſe* and *ſuch like Conſiderations* call for from us?

Let me proceed yet farther, have we not reason, *O Sons of Levi*, to bethink our selves, what 'tis hath made God so long to have had as 'twere a particular controversy *with us*? For I must say it, and *to Clergy men* methinks it should be nothing out of their ordinary Observation, *that if God be with us, none can be against us*: There is something that hath retarded the *Wheels* too of our *Chariot*, for otherwise *what success* might have been expected, (let me express it in the phrase of *Aquila*, 2 *Kings*, 2. 12.) from the *Chariot of Israel* and *the Horse men thereof*, from *the labours* of so many *worthy and learned men*, it may be spoken, (let us give God the Glory, and not take it to our selves, to *the Envy of other Churches*, *and Ages* that may be found among us? And yet we see *the Schisms, and Divisions* of the Nation *are not healed*; the *Schisms* too, *and divisions* (we must take *shame* to our selves, and give *God his Glory*,) among our selves are not so well cured, yet as to make us *of one mind*, as to what resolution we are to take for *our own*, *and others peace*; and *have made no noise*? if they had not, we had had no *new Oaths* to hastily publish, nor any need of replying to it. But let the fault be *in Priest, in People, in us, in them*; 'tis not the shifting it off from *me, or other party*, will make *the Judgments*, which still further threaten us, over the *Nations*; when the *common calamities* is let in, 'tis not our saying, that we did not *put up the Sluce*, will *keep us* from drowning any more *than others*.

Shall I say *communibus communia curemus*, or in *eadem omnes navigamus Scapha*, we are all in the *same Ship*, and *the same tempest*, if it once come, will concern *us all*; or we *all are in the true Protestant Church*, and *the Enemy* must let in, will equally take *us all*; Or is not our case (I speak to those who should consider such things, and see the mischiefs of still *encreasing our divisions*,) that of *Acts*, 27. 31. *Except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved*, are we not all in the *great danger of perishing*, if we *fall asunder*: And now *the Breaches*, what should we do but as St. *Paul* and *those with him* (as in *their Extremity*,) commit our selves together *to the Sea*, *to God* (in that Element) that Governs it in the most *tempestuous Waters*, that is able to bring us all to Shore. Let us give *thanks to God*, and *break our bread together*, Act. 27. 'tis the only way to *have us secure all from the Malice of any of us*, per. 34. If it, (as visible, as we keep up all *Civil and Religious Communion* among

among us, the *Priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth*, *Mal.* 2. 7. Such it, O my brethren for *your great Masters*, *for his Churches*, *for the Nations*, *for your own sakes*: If there be any thing, wherein you can accommodate in this *great Affair*, let not *small frivolous things* rob you of having the honour of being the *Repairers of our breaches*: Remember the zeal of our Lord, when he *drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple*, *John*, 2. 15, 16, 17. and what he said upon that occasion, *Mark*, 11. 17. *viz.* Is it not written, *my house shall be called of all Nations*, *the house of prayer*, the place where this is written, is *Isaiah*, 56. 7. *For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people*: Let us do all we can, to make *it such*; nothing can give such *efficacy to our prayers* as when they are thus indeed made *Common*; *i. e. such*, as far as is possible, that all may joyn in it; let *our Temples*, if it be the will of God, become such *houses of prayer* that *all people may* unite in *this pure offering* to him, *who* hath said *his name shall be great among the Heathen*, *Mal.* 1. 11. Remember (my Brethren) 'tis *worthy your piety*, *your zeal* to consider it, *Mal.* 1. 14. *But cursed be the Deceiver*, *which hath in his flock a male*, and *vowth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing*; *for I am a great King*, *saith the Lord of Hosts*, *and my name is dreadful among the heathen*. And before, *ver.* 8. *If ye offer the blind for Sacrifice*, *is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame*, *and sick*, *is it not evil? offer it now unto thy Governour*, *will he be pleased with it*, *or accept thy person saith the Lord of Hosts?* And again, *vers.* 11. *For from the rising of the Sun*, *to the going down of the same*, *my name shall be great among the Gentiles*, *and in every place incense shall be offer'd unto my name*, *and a pure offering*: It is on the Cursed worship this seems to be spoken, and the use, which that imports us to make of it, is, that if any *thing be purer*, *than is that*, we should bring that as *our offering to the great God*.

For 'tis not sufficient to content our selves, that we have the best of Liturgies, if there may be a better had, especially, when we shall consider, we are *manumitted from the former*, and have no longer to say for what was *before indifferent*, that *is now made necessary by the Obedience we owe to those*, who are over us: No, the argument turns on the other hinge, and in a degree we are *Obedient to our Superiours*, if we do not make some change, and to be *Superstitious* now, and to *Idolize Liturgies*, and *Forms of Prayer*, which, and that so *Scandalous* ought by our laws *to be* [illegible] for the [illegible] the whole

Let me proceed yet farther, have we not reason, *O Sons of Levi*, to bethink our selves, what 'tis hath made God so long to have had as 'twere a particular controversy *with us*? For I must say it, and *to Clergy-men* methinks it should be nothing out of their ordinary Observation, *that if God be with us, none can be against us*: There is something that hath retarded the *Wheels* too of our *Chariot*, for otherwise *what success* might have been expected, (let me express it in the phrase of *Elisha*, 2 *Kings*, 2. 12.) from the *Chariot of Israel* and *the Horse men thereof*, from *the labours* of so many *worthy and learned men*, it may be spoken, (let us give God the Glory, and not take it to our selves, to *the Envy of other Churches*, *and Ages* that may be found among us? And yet we see the *Schisms, and divisions* of the Nation *are not healed*; the *Schisms too, and divisions* (we must take *shame* to our selves, and give *God his Glory*,) among our selves are not so *well cured*, yet as to make us *of on mind*, as to what resolution we are to take for *our own, and others peace*; and *have these no voice?* if they had not, we had had no *Vox Cleri* so hastily publisht, nor any need of replying *to it*. But let the fault be *in Priest, or People, in us, or others*; 'tis not the shifting it off from *one, or other party*, will make *the Judgments*, which still farther threaten us, ever the *less National*; when the *common Inundation* is let in, 'tis not our saying, that we did not *put up the Sluce*, will *save us* from drowning any more *then others*.

Shall I say *eandem omnes conscendimus navem*, or in *eâdem omnes navigamus Ecclesiâ*, we are all in the *same Ship*, and *the same Sipwrack*, if it once come, will concern *us all*; or we *all are in the same Protestant Church*, and *the Enemy* once let in, will equally strike *at all*; Or is not our case, (I speak to those who should consider such things, and see the mischiefs of still continuing *our divisions*,) that of *Acts*, 27. 31. *Except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved*, are we not all in the *greatest danger of perishing*, if we *still separate*: And now *my Brethren*, what should we do but as St. *Paul* and *those with him* did *in their Extremity*, commit our selves together *to the Sea*, ver. 40. *to him* that *Governs* it in the most *tempestuous seasons*, and who is able to bring us all to Shore. Let us *give thanks to God*, and *break* our bread together, *ver.* 35. 'tis the only way not to *have an hair fall from the head of any of us*, *ver.* 34. If it, be possible, let us keep up all *civil and Religious Communion*

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among us, the *Priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth, Mal.* 2. 7. Seek it, O my Brethren for *your great Masters, for his Churches, for the Nations, for your own sakes*: If there be any thing, wherein you can accommodate in this *great Affair*, let not *small frivolous things* rob you of having the honour of being the *Repairers of our breaches*: Remember the zeal of our Lord, when he *drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple, John*, 2. 15, 16, 17. and what he said upon that occasion, *Mark*, 11. 17. *viz.* Is it not written, *my house shall be called of all Nations, the house of prayer*, the place where this is written, is *Isaiah*, 56. 7. *For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people*: Let us do all we can, to make *it such*; nothing can give such *efficacy to our prayers* as when they are thus indeed made *Common*; i. e. *such*, as far as is possible, that all may joyn in; let our *Temples*, if it be the will of God, become such *houses of prayer* that *all people may* unite in *this pure offering* to him, who hath *said his name shall be great among the Heathen, Mal.* 1. 11. Remember (my Brethren) 'tis *worthy your piety, your zeal* to consider it, *Mal.* 1. 14. but *cursed be the Deceiver, which hath in his Flock a male*, and *voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing*; *For I am a great King saith the Lord of Hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.* And before, *ver.* 3. *If ye offer the blind for Sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame, and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy Governour, will he be pleased with it, or accept thy person saith the Lord of Hosts?* And again, *ver.* 11. *For from the rising of the Sun, to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offer'd unto my name, and a pure offering*: It is of the *Gospel worship* this seems to be spoken, *and the use*, which that imports us to make *of it*, is, that if any *thing be purer, than other*, we should bring that as *our offering to the great God.*

For 'tis not sufficient to content our selves, that we have the *best of Liturgies*, if there may be a better had, especially, when we shall consider, we are *manumitted from the former*, and have no longer to say for what was *before indifferent*, that 'tis now *made necessary by the Obedience we owe to those, who are over us*: No, the Argument turns on the other hinge, and in a degree we *are Disobedient to our Superiours*, if we do not *make some change*, and to be *Disobedient* not only *in lawful things*, and *for the Glory of God*, what is, and must be acknowledg'd by our selves *to be such*, (for to 'tis *to change* for what is

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in *any degree better*, what is more *Holy and Pure*, what is *for Peace and Union*,) is to add the higheſt aggravation of *prophaneſs to it*: 'Tis *to fight againſt God*, and make *his offering to be abhorred*, and *our ſelves to ſtink in the Noſtrils of the People*.

Remember we, what *St. Peter* ſaid upon another Occaſion, *Acts* 11.17. *What was I, that I could withſtand God?* So here, when ſo *fair an Occaſion* is offer'd for the *eaſing our ſelves and others*, and *removing the Scandals*, whether *given or taken* (I diſtinguiſh not) what are we, that we ſhould *withſtand ſuch a Providence*, which looks ſo like *the Voice and Call of God?* 'Twas in the caſe of *Peters going in to the Gentiles*, and being the *Inſtrument thereby* to inlarge *the Borders of the Church*, which is our Caſe, that he makes that *his Defence*; And methinks 'tis the *ſame Viſion* he had, with reference *to thoſe*, we are to hope hereby to bring in, that preſents it ſelf to us: *Viz.* That we would account nothing *Common or Unclean*, *which God hath cleanſed*; that we would not doubt to do all we can to *take in thoſe*, that hitherto we have lookt upon as ſuch, that ſeeing the *Common Title of all Believers to the Priviledges of the Church*, we would do all that in us lies, that there might be no diſtinction of *Clean or Unclean* among us; but that we might all be *Holy to the Lord*, as 'tis in that forementiond place of *Malachi*, the *ſame Incenſe*, the *ſame peace Offering might in all places be offer'd up unto his Name*, *who hath ſaid he will be great among the Gentiles*.

And is there any thing can make him *ſo great*, as when *all his Saints* ſhall joyn in *the ſame Worſhip*? When *from the riſing of the Sun to the going down thereof*, (and there's nothing like *Accord and Unity* among Chriſtians to promote this) that *General Harmony* ſhall run through the *ſervices of his people*, whereby will be fulfilled, what is ſaid in *Zecha.* 14.9. *And the Lord ſhall be King over all the Earth; in that day there ſhall be one Lord, and his Name one.* It is, I doubt not, of *the glorious ſtate of the Goſpel*, that ſhall be in the *latter days*, that this is ſpoken: And can there be any thing more for the *Honour of the Church* of which we are, than to begin *that ſtate*.

They are our diviſions in our Worſhip, that are the great *ſtumbling block to Jew, and Gentile*, to all that are without, but who in due time, ſhall be brought in within the Pale of the Church, let us no longer ſhut the door againſt them.

We ſhall be *ill Shepherds*, if we leſſen *our own Flock*; very unfit to bear Office, *under him*, ſo glorious a part of *whoſe Character* it is, *to feed the Flock like a Shepherd*, *to gather the Lambs with*

with his Arm, and carry them in his Bosom, and *gently lead those that are with young,* (as 'tis *Isaiah* 40. 11.) if we have so *little tenderness* for those who belong to *our charge,* so *little tenderness for mankind,* for the *whole Flock and charge of Christ,* as by excluding *them our Communion* to *expose them,* and *our selves* to the *Wolves*; to those, who will be ready enough not only to *gather up the straglers, to prey* upon, *and devour those,* whom we have not so *much Charity to invite into the Fold,* but will be ready to *break in upon us too,* and make little distinction *of what Flock the Sheep are,* when they have once tasted *the sweetness of their Blood.*

But *how are we sure that all we shall do in what is here pleaded for, will not be lost Labour?*

How are we sure by opening the *door so wide,* that we shall not even thus *let in the Wolves too?*

How are we sure, that we shall not *our selves be a Prey to the Wolves?* That all this, as 'tis in the Fable, is not the *craft of those,* who like the *Fox* would perswade the *Cock* to come down *out of the Tree,* because there was *a general Peace* proclaim'd *among the Beasts*; when in the mean time they were within the *Cry of the Dogs,* that were ready to *seize them both,* when out of their *fast holds?* Is it not the design of ill men, to have the *Sluces pulled up,* before there is any due care taken to *stop the inundation,* that will necessarily follow? Or in the usual Allusion to *pull down the Old House,* before care is taken to lay the *Foundation for a New one?* Which instead of *repairing,* is but to make *the greater Ruin*; instead of raising *a New Fabrick,* is but to make *our dwelling a place,* as 'tis expresst *Lament.* 5. 18. *for the Foxes to walk on,* &c. to *tread down, and insult over us,* when we shall have laid open our *own weakness,* and instead of inviting others *to shelter themselves with us,* have put our selves out of a Capacity to defend *either them; or our selves?* Or how are we sure, that what we shall do herein, *will ingage those,* to whom we pretend *this great Tenderness,* to *joyn with us?* How can we tell, whether one Concession may not only make way for another? and that at last all must be given up to quiet them, who neither, should we do that, can we assure our selves, they should be contented?

I confess thus *Carnal interest* would argue, thus *those,* who *live by sense,* and *not by faith* will press us with their reasonings. And had *we an Eye* that lookt no farther *than sense*; this might be too apt to prevail. But do we but consider what we ought to do *as Christians,* as *men of Faith,* more than *Reason,* and all this will vanish. For

For *who is it*, to *whom we* profess to have devoted our selves? Whose *work is* it, we are upon? For *whose sake is* it, we shall do, what is expected? Is it not the *Glory of God*, *the Honour of Christ*, and *the good of his Church*, we have in prospect? And are we afraid, *He* will not *defend* us, whilst we *act in his Cause*? Are we afraid of the *Policies of Crafty men*, whilst 'tis this *wonderful Counsellor*, whose dictates we are desirous to attend? Are we afraid, (we must renounce *our profession*, and *disclaim our selves* to be his *Clergy*, *his Lot*, and *inheritance*, if we entertain so mean a thought) he will not be *true to himself*, *and his promises* to his Church? Can the *Gates of Hell prevail against it*, whilst *the Rock of Ages*, *is* he, on whom we depend? Be we but satisfied, that what we do, is *with Integrity*, is *with submission to the guidance of his Holy Spirit*, is with *that self denial* as to resign up all *to his Will*; and can we question, whether *He can*, or *will herein* defend us?

Remember my Brethren, what is said *Exod.* 34. 24. *Neither shall any man desire thy Land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year.* Enemies enough lay about the *Jews*, all the world were in a manner such to them; And what a *Temptation* must it be to them, when the *Land was left Naked*, to make their *inroads into it*? But see what was *their Bulwork*, *what the Walls of their Salvation*; 'twas the assurance *of Gods Providence* watching over them.

For *their Sins*, their Neighbours often *desired their Land*, and *brought them* under; *led them into Captivity*, and *destroy'd their City*, and *Temple it self*; But *their going up* to it, and *Worshipping* God as they ought there, never gave their Enemies an advantage against them: No, *Gods Service*, whilst they continued true to it, as it is *in our Liturgy*, was *perfect freedom*; that which would always have kept them in the full *enjoyment of their Liberties*, had they not *enslaved themselves to*, and *by their Transgressions*.

Nor can we Christians doubt the same security, if we do our Duty: I could shew how in all the Revolutions of that Nation, when they *put their trust in men*, made *the Arm of Flesh their Confidence*, they *were still Defeated*; whereas when they *made God their Refuge*, as in the Case of *their Judges*, *of David*, *of Jehosaphat*, *of Hezekiah*, &c. *always Success*, *always Prosperity* went along with them; and with respect to mens acting *their Faith on God*, *whilst in his ways*, 'tis laid down as a standing Reason of the Churches confidence

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Mulachi. 3. 6. *for I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not consumed*, therefore *none* can be *consumed*, *who trust in him*

If he wrought *Miracles for the Israelites*, were *we* sure to be reduced to the same Extremities, cannot he *do the same* for us? If not, why hath *our Lord* left it upon record, *that if our Faith be but as a grain of Mustard-Seed, we shall say to this mountain be thou removed hence to yonder place, and it shall be removed, and nothing shall be unpossible to us*, Matth. 17. 20.

Be our *enemies* ever so *watchful*, ever so powerful, have we not a good Security against them. Prov. 16. 7. *When a mans ways please the Lord, he maketh even his Enemies to be at Peace with him?*

Who can tell, but the *Candor, and Ingenuity, the Honesty, and Sincerity*, with which we act, may so far prevail *with those*, who *wait for our halting* that as 'tis 1 *Cor.* 14. 25. *They may fall down, and worship God with us, and say God is in you of a Truth?* there's no such way to perswade men, as this, to let them see, how intirely we *follow God*; How willing we are to *sacrifice* all we can *to Peace*.

It is worth our considering, what improbability, ever since we have been a Church, I mean a *national, Protestant Church*, hath been the reason, we have had *Enemies on both hands, from* Rome, *and at home?* And whether the Comment on it be not that of *Revel.* 3. 18. *I counsel thee to buy of me Gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white rayment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine Eyes with Eye salve, that thou mayest see?*

May not it be to *open our eyes* at length, that we have had so many *Tryals from God?*

What were the *many Controversies, that upon the Reformation* presently succeeded *among our selves*, but to mind us still of a *further Reformation*; and if after the disputes with those zealous Brethren (I defend not *their mistakes*, I only observe *their Pretences*) things grew *still worse and worse, till a civil war was brought into our Bowels, the Head of our Church, and the first Pillar of it Sacrificed in the cause, and the Church it self* devested of *all its outward Advantages*, and only *a remnant* left, that were driven *into Corners*, what can this signifie, *but some lesson*, that God was teaching us by such a rod? I pray God, we may at length take it out as we ought; and if the *same Providence*, which had thus exercised the Nation, *brought back our Captivity*, settled the *Son of that Martyr'd Prince*, upon *his Fathers throne*, brought him *in with that Glory, those acclamations* that never *Prince* before appear'd with in this Nation, restored *the Hierarchy, and raised the Church to its former glory*, Is it not worth our considering, that as the *great Tryal of King and People, those*, who had been *punisht for their sins*, there were *new offers of a Reformation*, and in Part that was made? Whether it proceeded as far, as it should, *God best knows, and under him*, that is, what is now offer'd to

your Enquiry; And 'tis upon *a Revolution extraordinary and Miraculous*, as that of the return of *Charles the Second* was, that this is again propoſed.

Reject it not my Brethren, *reject it* not, as you your ſelves would *not be rejected of God*: For I perſwade my ſelf we are *under the Criſis*, and if we put from us *this day of Salvation*; If *when* the *Kingdom of Heaven is ſo nigh at hand*, we *refuſe to repent*, Mat. 3. 2. μετανοεῖτε to change our minds as to thoſe *rigorous impoſitions* (ſo ſome will call them) that we would *ſtill retain*, we have reaſon to fear, as it is, v. 10. *That the Ax is laid to the root of the Tree*, (I would not be an ill Prophet, but if this ſhould be, men will then ſeverely enough reflect on what they have been *Warned of*, but *have neglected*) *and that every Tree, that bringeth not forth good Fruit, ſhall be hewn down, and caſt into the Fire.*

Conſider 'twas *the doom of the beſt Church*, that ever was in the World, upon their *refuſing to reform*, you have it *Matth.* 21. 43. *Therefore I ſay unto you*, the *Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruit thereof.*

We of the Gentiles, who enjoy the Goſpel, reap the *benefit* of their doom.

We of this Nation, above all the world, let it not be *our doom* to have *the Kingdom of God likewiſe taken from us*, and *given to others bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

But this is an Exhortation, might be heard, were we *ſure* thoſe *whom we are willing to open the doors of the Church to, would come in*: But alas, what we can give them will only *expoſe the Church*, and *not reclaim them*: Why then ſhould *we not reſt, where we are?* why not *defend the ſpot*, that they have ſo *envious an eye upon.*

Pardon me, my Brethren, if I ſay 'tis weak, and unworthy of *Divines* thus to argue: *Thoſe* who *are men of Conſcience*, will not *ſeek new occaſions of quarrell*, where, what is *Chriſtian-like* is done *by us*; *thoſe* who are *men of no Conſcience*, would be glad to ruin *them*, and *us.*

But *are we ſure our labour is loſt?* I ſay, morally ſpeaking, we are *ſure of the contrary*; there's none of us, who live in *Pariſhes*, and are acquainted with our *reſpective Flocks*, but we know, that there *are ſome*, who would be *contented*, and think it *a great Bleſſing to be eaſed in thoſe things*, which I perſwade my ſelf, with *a good Conſcience* may be *yielded to them*: *And he that converteth a Sinner from the Error of his way, ſhall ſave a Soul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins*, James, 5. 20.

Were they but *ſingle Souls* we ſhould hereby gain, 'tis *worth our Condiſcenſion*, 'tis what will *increaſe our glory*, and make *us ſhine as brighter Stars for ever, and ever*, Dan. 12. 3.

But certainly we have *reaſon to hope, the ſucceſs will be greater*; nay we have no reaſon *to doubt it*; for what is it, will win upon men, if not that

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real concern, they ſhall find we have *for their Souls*, when we ſhall preſerve *their peace* before any *temporal intereſt of our own*? For me-thinks, I would not *have that* have any ingrediency in this matter; *you* very well know, what *Schiſms*, *their being carnal*, and *acting as men*, made in *the Church of Corinth*, 1 Corinth. 3. 3. *Ye* very well know, how 'tis this, that hath carried on all *the corruptions of Rome*; ye very well know, 'tis to deny your ſelves to be *Chriſt's Diſciples*, (were even that the caſe) not to take *up your Croſs, and follow him.*

But what did I ſay *the Croſs*? Is it not to follow him, that will make, as 'tis *Iſaiah*, 58. 8, 9. *Our light to break forth as the morning*, our health to ſpring forth ſpeedily, our Righteouſneſs ſhall go before us, and the Glory of the *Lord ſhall be our reward: Then ſhall we call, and the Lord ſhall anſwer, we ſhall cry, and he ſhall ſay here I am; if we take away from the midſt of us the Yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and the ſpeaking Vanity*, ver. 10. And if *we draw out our Soul to the hungry, and ſatisfy the afflicted Soul, then ſhall our light riſe in Obſcurity, and our darkneſs* be as the noon day, *ver.* 11. And the Lord ſhall *guide us continually, and ſatisfie our Soul in drought, and make full our bones, and we ſhall be like a Water-garden, and like a ſpring of Water, whoſe waters fail not*, v. 12. *And they that be of us ſhall build the old waſte places, we ſhall raiſe up the foundations of many Generations, and we ſhall be call'd the repairers of the breach, the reſtorers of Paths to dwell in.*

And what now can be the reſult of all, but that conſidering *thoſe and thoſe other Reaſons* you are able to ſuggeſt to your ſelves *for the Alterations*, that are here pleaded for, *you take the ſame courſe* in *your debatings*, *which the Apoſtles* did in the *firſt ſolemn Council at* Jeruſalem. And that is to be ſure *to preface all you ſhall determine* with *it ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and us* Acts 15. 22. and in the reſolution of what ye ſhall decree *to lay upon your ſelves, and your Brethren no more than neceſſary things*, v. 28. And if that be the meaſure of what ye ſhall do, ye will have reaſon to hope, *it will be received* as *their decree was*, i. e. ſo as to end *in their rejoycing for the Conſolation*, v. 31.

'Twill be a very *unhappy Omen* upon your proceedings, (and therefore in the *Name of God, the God of peace and comfort*) take heed above all things of thoſe *Heats and Animoſities*, which ſome will be apt enough to provoke you to) *if ye*, who are met upon ſuch *weighty things*, as what concerns the *purity of our Religion*, the *very ſimplicity of the Goſpel*, ſhall at your *very entrance* on the *great Work*, chaſe away *that good ſpirit*, by whom alone ye can expect to be *rightly directed in it.*

I would not reflect on any thing, which hath been ſaid by any of *that Venerable Aſſembly* you make; only I cannot but obſerve the great miſtake of that applauded ſaying, *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutare*, the higheſt contradiction

tradiction imaginable to our Constitution; for he who saith so, hath at once *dissolved the Fundamentals of Church and State*; for why else do *Parliaments meet*? Why *are Convocations* Assembled if the *Rule* be every where so perfect, that it can *admit no change*?

It was certainly well resolved *pro tempore*, when that was agreed to be the present sense of the *Barons*, with respect to what was then, *viz.* proposed *in the Legitimation of Bastardy to have past into a Law*: But 'tis the same that is resolved in every thing *in Parliament*, to which *either House doth not consent*, and which is not *continu'd by the Royal Authority*: 'Tis *Nolumus mutare leges Angliæ*, *they see no present Reason to change what is proposed*, but you applying this *to Religious Affairs*, and that when the Honour of God, and the Peace of his Church are concern'd in the Change, is to forget how much more proper 'twould have been in the Mouth of a Clergy-man, *Nolumus mutare leges Evangelii*, *Nolumus mutare leges Christi*, *Nolumus mutare leges Dei*: Charity is the standing Law of all, *the bearing with our weaker Brethren*, the *denying our selves*, where Truth is in debate, (the Principle on which *we were made Christians*, the only Proof we can give of our being of *our great Masters Religion*.

Is there any thing offer'd, that is not so agreeable *to the Will of God*, to the *Rules of our Lord*, *to the Gospel we preach*, and are we still fond to *retain it*: No, let us do as in the first Councils *set the Holy Gospels in the Throne*; let us *revere those*, as *if Christ were* present with us, and let us say only with respect to what is there deliver'd; *Nolumus mutare has leges*: We *are Christians*, *we pretend to nothing*, we will *retain nothing*, that interferes with what *great Legislator hath enacted*.

This is that, that above all things will establish us, if we make our *Communion such* (and the Gospel, that Charity therein prescribed will teach us how to do it,) *against which none can reasonably object*; hath the *Church of England* been already so *great a Bulwark against the Romanists*, what will it be when strengthned *with those Accessions*, we are not to fear, but we shall hereby bring in? I would hope that *that God*, who maketh men to *be of one mind in a house* were then indeed among us, and if *God be for us*, *who can be against us*?

I have no more to say but, *the God of Peace*, *of Order*, *of Love and Comfort* be among us all. *Amen.*

FINIS.